

2010 RPI BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS® AWARD Winner

Standard 2 – Management Responsibility

TELUS Communications

Senior leaders define strategy, provide guidance and encouragement, and pay careful attention to metrics.

A Recognition Professionals International White Paper

The RPI Best Practice Standards Awards, presented annually, represent recognition program excellence. In order to win an award an organization must submit an application and be judged superior in one or more of the seven categories, which include:

1. Recognition Strategy
2. Management Responsibility
3. Recognition Program Measurement
4. Communication Plan
5. Recognition Training
6. Recognition Events and Celebrations
7. Program Change and Flexibility

For the extraordinary contribution of corporate management to recognition program success - TELUS Communications was honored with a 2010 RPI Best Practice Standards® Award for Standard 2 – Management Responsibility.

Following is a background of the organization, followed by details of its continuously evolving recognition program - with a more in-depth look at the Management Responsibility aspect leading to the RPI award.

About TELUS Communications

TELUS is a leading national telecommunications company in Canada with 36,000 employees, and 11.6 million customer connections that include 6.1 million wireless subscribers, 4.2 million wireline network access lines and 1.2 million Internet subscribers. The company provides a wide range of communications products and services including data, Internet protocol (IP), voice, entertainment, and video.

Waterstone Human Capital named TELUS to its 2009 list of Top 10 Most Admired Corporate Cultures in Canada. One of the judging criteria was “rewards, recognition, and innovative business achievement.” In the list’s 5-year history, TELUS is the only telecom company to be included.

Program Overview

The company instituted a trailblazing recognition program in 1999. Then in 2007, the five-member recognition team, with active input from CEO Darren Entwistle – decided to rejuvenate, revamp, and rename the program. They chose the name *Bravo* – a word that’s meaningful to employees who speak both French and English.

Although many recognition programs are tied to RPI’s 7 Best Practice Standards, TELUS goes further by encouraging departments to develop individual components based on the standards. All full-time, part-time, and temporary team members can participate in Bravo. Contractors can send and receive e-cards but cannot receive points.

Recognition Strategy

Their recognition strategy is: *At TELUS, we strive to create a culture of appreciation where giving and receiving recognition is easy and supports our spirited teamwork value.*

TELUS believes that increased employee engagement directly impacts individual and corporate performance – including productivity improvements, customer satisfaction, revenue growth, retention, attendance, and overall employee satisfaction. The company uses the Hewitt engagement model to survey team members and provide the basis for recognition planning.¹

The Bravo program is tightly linked to the following four TELUS values:

- We embrace change and initiate opportunity.
- We have a passion for growth.
- We believe in the spirit of teamwork.
- We have the courage to innovate.

Their recognition strategy also has the following two guiding principles that provide direction for their programs and initiatives:

1. Corporate Citizenship – Support for a wide range of charities - including local charities. Once a year, team members can donate the dollar value of their Bravo points to charities of their choice. Since its inception in 2007, over 2000 team members have donated points with a total value of more than \$240,000 to charity.
2. Environmental Focus – Support of environmental initiatives. In partnership with Tree Canada, employees are offered the option of planting a tree in their province as their career milestone memento. Employees who select the tree option are personally thanked by Tree Canada for their contribution via email. On average, 40 percent of eligible team members select the option.²

In conjunction with the TELUS Engagement Forum (TEF), senior leader champions from each business unit are designated as “primes”. They provide direction related to recognition team priorities and areas of focus. Every year, TEF reviews and endorses the strategy and planned areas of focus for the next year. Based on their endorsement of recognition-related priorities, the detailed plans are developed and status reports are provided at the bi-monthly meetings. The

¹ For information on the Hewitt Engagement Model, visit http://was2.hewitt.com/bestemployers/canada/pages/driving_engagement.htm

² For more information on Tree Canada, visit: <http://www.treecanada.ca/site/?page=home&lang=en>

TEF has championed the importance of recognition and endorsed the creation and launch of several recognition-related initiatives that complement the existing recognition framework. Of particular note are the Recognition Prime Network and Social Media Integration.

Recognition Prime Network

The Recognition Prime Network was launched in 2009 with representatives from across the enterprise and across Canada. The Network meets monthly to take advantage of the thought leadership provided by the core human resources recognition team and to share best practices from within their functional areas – 80 recognition department-level primes have been created so far. New primes attend an orientation session and receive access to support materials such as toolkits and webinars.

Recognition primes either volunteer or are chosen from within their own areas. They are selected because of their passion for recognition and collaborative nature in sharing best practice information. The prime's role is to:

- Act as a subject matter expert in their workgroup
- Serve as a local resource responsible for disseminating information
- Influence and champion local practices and behaviors inline with best practices
- Execute actions within their area to drive best practices – presenting to VP's and gaining buy-in
- Support continuous improvement

A significant element of the 2009 recognition strategy was to grow this network and fully leverage the primes in order to drive the recognition message throughout the organization.

Social Media Integration

In 2009, the TELUS team implemented targeted social media tools to accommodate and take advantage of Millennial and Gen X employees' preference for a more collaborative approach to recognition.

The cornerstone of TELUS' social media framework is a recognition network wiki that promotes blogging on recognition topics and best practice sharing. In 2009, TELUS launched an ambitious initiative to increase the awareness of recognition by profiling influential and credible TELUS leaders through a new recognition learning series. The series, offered monthly to leaders who have direct reports, is moderated by the core recognition team using Microsoft Live Meeting® and conference calls.

“Due to the type of company and industry we function within we have a richness of social media at TELUS,” said David McPhail, TELUS' Director of Human Resources. “As part of our recognition communication plan overall, we ensure diversity and social media are deployed, including an employee portal with voting and collaboration segments plus several different social media options, such as TELUS Yammer, webinars, blogging capability, Live Meeting, and other media. Looking forward we will be exploring SharePoint for 2011.”

Four Tiers

The traditional recognition program model includes three tiers of recognition: Formal, Informal, and Day-to-Day. TELUS added a fourth category – Relationship.

This category focuses on relationship building as a foundation for the other three layers. TELUS believes that strong relationships are a key element that enable the other recognition layers to be more meaningful and impactful.

“Eighty percent of a team members' recognition efforts should be spent on day-to-day recognition and nurturing positive relationships,” David said. “Showing genuine interest in others, understanding who they are, and realizing their recognition preferences creates positive

relationships and results. By including this level, we are reinforcing that recognition is not just about rewards.”

The *Bravo* program includes:

- Four levels of award nominations designed to recognize individuals who demonstrate the TELUS values. Bravo awards are often presented by senior leaders at formal ceremonies throughout the year.
- TELUS' Career Milestone program, which recognizes an average of 4,000 employees per year. Employees are recognized every five years with a gift of Bravo points and their choice of a memento. Managers are encouraged to celebrate career milestones and are offered suggestions based on the recognition best practice guidelines.
- The Ovation program, which recognizes all department employees who have completed at least 25 years of service. Employees received a gift of Bravo points and their choice of memento.

RPI's Best Practice Standards of recognition excellence provide the consistent framework and structure necessary for TELUS to ensure that their program is based on best practices and aligned to corporate strategy. The recognition team created checklists and templates in 2009 based on the seven standards.



Management Responsibility

At TELUS, senior leadership is critical to the successful creation and execution of an enterprise-wide recognition strategy. Senior leaders extend their roles beyond theoretical guidance to ensuring that accountability is built into every aspect of the program. The recognition team considers itself fortunate to have visible and consistent support at the most senior level – CEO Darren Entwistle.

CEO Entwistle is a passionate recognition supporter. He steadfastly promotes recognition that supports TELUS values and embeds recognition in many initiatives that he personally endorses.

Importantly, the CEO supports generous capital and operational funding for recognition each year. The TELUS budget guidelines encourage business units to allow for recognition initiatives. The directive is that all budgets allocate the equivalent of 1 percent of salary expense to recognition. This funding is held at both the corporate and business unit levels to ensure that the recognition strategy and initiatives can be effectively executed. The money is used to fund the Bravo program and team celebrations and informal recognition activities.

“Our CEO has visibly imbedded recognition in many initiatives that he personally endorses and supports,” David said. “Visible support by the senior level is essential to our success and our programs. When team members see the senior management endorsement, they follow suit and replicate the behavior or action.”

TELUS' Human Resources Executive Vice President, Josh Blair, is also an ardent recognition supporter and believes in the impact of an effective, well-executed recognition strategy.

With his guidance and support, initiatives are underway that educate all team members around best practices for building strong relationships in, daily recognition, informal recognition, and formal recognition. The Recognition Essentials Framework was adopted across TELUS and promoted as a holistic approach to recognition – eventually leading to the creation of the TELUS Engagement Forum.

TELUS Engagement Forum (TEF)

The TEF provides a disciplined approach to ensuring that senior leadership participates actively in the process of defining recognition strategy. The Forum consists of senior level representatives, from each business unit, who are accountable for overseeing engagement definition and execution.

The Forum is a critical element in the policy and strategy development and the execution of programs and initiatives - through bi-monthly reviews with the core recognition team. The Forum provided the inspiration for a new recognition workshop for all *people* leaders. The workshop will be added to the curriculum of recognition-related courses that already exist in 2010.

Senior management allocated resources in the following areas:

- **The 5-Member Core Recognition Team:** The recognition team – within Human Resources – is a dedicated group responsible for managing and promoting TELUS' corporate recognition programs and driving a culture of appreciation by: defining the enterprise strategy; establishing policies and processes; leading the establishment of programs and initiatives; defining metrics and expectations; creating and distributing communications and learning materials; and designing support materials and toolkits.
- **Leadership Development:** Senior management has fully endorsed recognition as a core leadership skill and it is included in all levels of supervisory leadership development
- **Funding for Recognition Awards:** Recognition budgets are set yearly in all business units specifically to fund activity in the Bravo program, informal recognition, and team celebrations.
- **Recognition Prime Network:** A significant element of the recognition strategy is to grow this network and fully leverage the primes to drive the recognition message throughout the organization. The Recognition Network meets monthly to take advantage of the thought leadership provided by the Core Recognition Team.

Among the many ways that managers are held responsible for recognition, are the following three:

- **The Engagement Survey:** TELUS uses the Hewitt engagement model and annual employee survey. Engagement is closely tracked through an annual employee survey. The survey also asks employees if they feel recognized for their contributions – both of these measures - engagement and feeling recognized - are key scorecard targets for all business units. Every year TELUS teams analyze survey metrics and implement action plans for improvement. In addition, the survey directly impacts performance bonuses.
- **The Bravo Dashboard:** The Bravo system allows leaders to track recognition-related activity standard reports to ensure the defined metrics are being achieved. Reports include the number of employees who nominated others for recognition and the number of employees who received recognition through point awards or e-cards. These reports are regularly reviewed by the VP of Performance Culture as part of the monthly dashboard review.
- **Performance Objectives:** In 2009, *people* leader objective templates were launched to ensure engagement driver behaviors of supervisory leaders were defined and were part of the performance review process. Senior management holds TELUS leaders accountable for overall engagement.

Among the other recognition initiatives of the company's leaders, executives use Bravo to recognize large, successful projects. The project team-based recognition complements individual Bravo recognition initiatives. An example was an award to a 3,000 member team from the EVP and SVP to thank them for their efforts during a business system outage that impacted customer service.

Going above and beyond, TELUS' CTO ran a contest for all Edmonton employees during the Christmas holiday season. Hundreds of employees submitted their names in a random drawing to win a 5-course dinner for four at the CTO's home.

It's worth noting that CEO Entwistle initiated the first recognition program nine years ago when he first joined the company. He also initiated the 2007 effort that resulted in the new program.

Program Measurement

TELUS gathers feedback on their recognition program in the following ways:

1. The Annual Employee Survey: This is distributed to all employees and includes specific survey questions related to recognition and verbatim comments. The results are reviewed and action plans developed prior to the following year. The survey provides a clear indication of the recognition program's impact. For example, the 2009 survey demonstrated that the frequency of recognition is directly correlated to employee engagement. Changes in the results trigger reviews and adjustments.
2. HR Stakeholder Survey: This is annually distributed to all directors and above. It contains specific questions related to recognition and verbatim comments. The results are reviewed and action plans developed.
3. Daily Employee Feedback: Voicemail and online mailboxes are monitored daily to identify trends and areas of opportunity.
4. Training Events: Post event surveys are analyzed and areas for improvement are addressed.
5. Annual Strategic Planning and Budget Creation

Communication Plan

As a data, IP, and wireless provider; TELUS has the advantage of being able to leverage IP, data and video-streaming technology. Current communication channels include the intranet link, the Bravo homepage, employee bulletins, direct email, posters, webinars, and the CEO's monthly e-letter. *Go Ahead, Makes Someone's Day* is the program's popular tagline.

Communication frequency is coordinated with other departments to keep employees from being inundated with emails – HR tracks a corporate communications calendar. Content topics include the following:

- Building a culture of appreciation
- Tools that are available for giving recognition
- Announcement of the recognition network
- Bravo application updates, contests, and promotions
- Invitations to leader webinars featuring recognition practices

The recognition team also uses a number of communications tools in communications/training sessions conducted with user groups. These include Microsoft Live Meeting, conference calls, online demonstrations, and online real-time Q & As.

Recognition Training

Formal and informal training by the recognition team has been a key element of Bravo's success in teaching leaders and employees the importance of recognition and how to deliver recognition effectively.

The *Everything Engagement* site houses everything employees need to know about engagement. Each driver, including recognition, has its own section where employees can learn more about recognition. The wiki includes the latest information and gives visitors a chance to blog and share ideas.

In addition to learning toolkits and online support materials, the recognition team created recognition worksheets that allow business areas to customize their own recognition programs to their unique goals and cultures. The worksheets take teams through a series of questions that result in a recognition plan that is strategic. It focuses on not only the recognition of achievement, but also on activities and behaviors that will lead them to success.

"All recognition reference materials, policies, processes, templates are created in both English and French," David explained. "By having 2 languages in our organization, cycle time needs to be considered to include the translation of materials in all forms."

The recognition team also provides links to informational recognition sites, such as RPI's www.Recognition.org, and suggests reading, such as whitepapers, that are available online.

TELUS also runs learning programs that have been designed to provide guidance on recognition. Courses are given in a face-to-face format, but are also available to employees online. Courses include:

- Welcome to TELUS: This is a corporate orientation program that gives new employees an overall view of TELUS and includes a recognition component, which explains the strategy and gives an introduction to the Bravo application.
- Expectations and Practices, Leading at TELUS: This is a 3-day course for new leaders that includes a recognition component designed to help the leader understand how to drive a culture of appreciation within the team.
- Engaging Conversations: Each month, a TELUS leader is featured and interviewed on the secrets of their success in keeping employees engaged. Each month's theme focuses on a different engagement driver. Last year, recognition was featured three times. Leaders from across the organization are invited to a 45-minute online interactive to learn from a leader who has proven engagement results. Leaders who attend can communicate after the session with the featured speaker via blogging.
- Recognition Prime Network Webinars: In support of the launch of the Recognition Prime Network in 2009, a member of the recognition team organized and chaired several sessions with the primes. All sessions are built around RPI's 7 Recognition Best Practice Standards to ensure consistency across the business.
- Bravo Training Sessions: To support one of TELUS' recognition objectives of driving and sustaining Bravo as a corporate standard, 2-hour monthly online sessions are held for employees to learn more about Bravo. During the sessions, participants can see a live demo of the application.

The training is paying off. Reports show that all business units in TELUS are actively participating in the program and that recognition is originating from all levels of the organization – frontline employees to senior leaders.

Recognition Events and Celebrations

TELUS corporately funds some awards, but, locally, each business area has the freedom to plan and budget for its own celebrations – including employee milestones. Business units also celebrate top performers and contributions that are inline with business unit objectives.

An example of a local event is the High Impressive Performers (HIP) event held several times a year. Nominated employees who win are honored for Living the TELUS Values, Spirited Team Work, Community Spirit, having a Passion for Growth, having the Courage to Innovate, and helping the company go green with the Green Award.

The celebrations take place in TELUS cities across Canada and are organized by a central committee to ensure consistency in the look, feel, and message. Employees who win invite their managers to the celebration. In addition, VPs, directors, operations managers, and other management team members attend. In 2009, HIP introduced the Above and Beyond Award, which recognizes a team member in each office who helps the business and other employees in an extraordinary way.

Larger, enterprise-wide offsite functions and galas are planned and implemented by the TELUS Event Marketing team. This ensures consistency in the programming and in the brand image. The team creates an event brief for others to follow.

The annual TELUS Presidents Club program is an incentive created to provide meaningful motivation to increase sales, reward the sales performance team for reaching their targets, and provide an opportunity to interact with executives. The program, which features a trip, is designed to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for winners and their guests.

Last year, winners went to Barcelona. Three weeks prior to leaving, each winner received a Spanish phrase book, program of events, and a book filled with biographies of each winner, host, and executive. The four day event - which included both planned activities and ample free time - featured lush, historic settings, great Spanish food, and world-class entertainment. On the final evening, guests had dinner at the National Palace.

Change and Flexibility Strategy

Following are examples of recognition program changes implemented in 2009:

- Career Milestone and Ovation Award Mementos: Based on feedback, the Career Milestone and Ovation memento were changed.
- Bravo Enhancements to Recognize Large Groups: In 2009, the recognition team made it easier to recognize large groups by: creating the ability to upload a group of employees reporting to a specific manager and upload a list of employees by importing a file. Employee names no longer need to be added individually.

TELUS also instituted a new *Work Styles* program to accommodate the needs of telecommuters. The recognition team had to adjust recognition tools and accessibility accordingly.

“Our focus from 2006 – 2008 was to build and launch Bravo, while still building our culture of appreciation,” David explained. “Since the launch in August 2008, we have focused not only on enhancing Bravo functionality, but have embraced new and exciting ways to reinforce our recognition goals and objectives through webinars, social networking, recognition networks, and creative reference ware. Our focus is to execute the core recognition principles and behaviors while looking for innovative ways to enhance recognition. “

Ultimately

It would be difficult to underestimate the importance that corporate funding, and management endorsement and participation have for a successful recognition program. TELUS is very fortunate to have all three. It's also worth noting that the TELUS recognition team fully appreciates management backing.

Because of this - and a model recognition program in general - Recognition Professionals International is pleased to honor TELUS Communications with a 2010 RPI Best Practice Standards® award for the commitment its management has made to foster a meaningful culture of recognition.

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About Recognition Professionals International (RPI)

Recognition Professionals International (RPI) is the only non-profit professional association at the forefront of employee recognition through its sole focus on recognition innovations and education as a systematic method for improvements in the workplace. RPI is endorsed by top authorities in the industry, and is the only association offering Certified Recognition Professional (CRP) courses and designation.